

TNS RECORDS FREE FANZINE



ISSUE 4
JANUARY 2009

STAND OUT RIOT
THE SHADOWCOPS
THE EMO S
DO THE DOG RECORDS

NEWS
FEATURES

UK PUNK AND SKA



MONKS' REST TEA GARDENS, WORLE

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Welcome to issue 4 of TNSRecords fanzine. It's been a long time in coming, but hopefully you'll enjoy it now it's here. We have interviews with some top quality bands, who we know you will love, so check 'em out.

It's also great to see some new people writing for TNS, it makes life easier for me and there are some great features in here from those people.

November 2008 was the 5th birthday of That's Not Skanking fanzine. Obviously I've re-badged it since then to coincide with the label launch, but this is actually my 22nd fanzine, which is a bit mad. I also realised whilst reminiscing that the first gig I ever put on was in 1998, which makes me feel very old, but also a bit proud too. In April the TNS band night will be five years old. It's been through 3 venues now, but hopefully it is improving all the time and I think the line ups have been getting better and better. I have seen so many great bands through doing these gigs and it has been a lot of fun. There is a gig guide on the back page of the fanzine so come along and see some of the best up and coming punk and ska bands from Manchester and further a field for as cheap as we can possibly make it.

It's also nearly a year since we released the TNS compilation and I'm really pleased with what the label has done since we started. Myself and Bev now have absolutely no free time, but we think it's worth it. I love all 3 releases and it's great that these CDs have helped bands I love. They have received really positive reviews from loads of fanzines and had lots of air play, both in the UK and much further a field. In fact the latest Punk Rock Demonstration Podcast from the USA (www.punkrockdemo.com) played the whole compilation, which is awesome and Horijon, The Fractions and Revenge of... are interviewed on the UK special of the Pressure Drop Soundcast, along with Kev from Do the Dog. This should be out anytime soon and is a fantastic listen. (www.pressuredrop.podomatic.com) A big shout out should also go to Punk and Disorderly on Phoenix fm in Halifax, who have been big TNS supporters. In fact thanks to anyone who has played or reviewed any of our stuff, it is very much appreciated!

Starting the label has been a huge highlight of 2008. We have nearly sold out of compilations. We still have both splits in stock so please check out the webstore at www.tnsrecords.co.uk and pick them up for just £4 each. We have some very exciting releases coming up too.

The long awaited Shadowcaps album sounds brilliant and that will be available in February. May will be great for fans of fast punk as it will see the release of a full length Revenge of the Psychotronic Man album and a Sounds of Swami 7" inch, which will showcase the bands hardcore punk side.

We'll be following that up with more fast in the shape of a Kiriz album in summer and are also hoping to release an album for ska heroes Horijon, and fingers crossed, a new compilation this year. There are whispers of other things to so we'll keep you all posted. We are also supporting the amazing new Stand Out Riot CD, Carnival Militia and the upcoming Enos's album (if we had infinite money we would have put them both out ourselves). Both are available from our distro.

Starting a label has always been one of my ambitions, so it was great to achieve that, but playing some gigs abroad was another thing I've always wanted to do, so it was great that Revenge of... got to do some gigs in the Czech Republic. Our tour diary was printed in the latest issue of Second City magazine, which is free so grab a copy of that.

Another huge highlight has been IGNITION. For those who don't know, TNS joined forces with our good friends at Bomb Ibiza and Silt Records to put on a small festival as an alternative to Leeds in August. This was so much fun and we are def gonna make it happen again this year. The bands were great and we are really eager to contribute to unifying the local scene, to make Manchester as cool as possible so it was great to work with other local promoters. TNS and Bomb Ibiza also joined forces to put on another Ignition event on New Years Eve. I used to hate NYE with a passion, so I can confidently say this was the best one I've ever had and I'm sure all who come would agree it was a fantastic night. I'm hoping we can put on more Ignition events next year and we are also eager to work with other local promoters. The way we see it, music is not a competition so the more local promoters work together, the more Manchester is going to ROCK!

Enjoy this issue, make sure you pick up a Shadowcaps album and we'll hopefully see you at a gig soon.

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The Subway, Oldham.

This issue was put together by: Mike Corrigan, Samantha Cryer, Dangerous Jamie, Nathan Mallon, Natalie Walsh and me. Most photos are by Bev and the cover and layout was by me.

Buy TNS releases from these awesome shops and distros as well as from all the bands: Rockers - Manchester, Poxadilly Records - Manchester, Action Records - Preston, Vibes - Bury, Jumbos Records - Leeds, Crash - Leeds,

Probe - Liverpool, All Ages - London, Banquet records - Kingston, Spillers -

Cardiff, Punker bunker - Brighton, Selecta Disk - Nottingham

On the net: tnsrecords.co.uk, punkorder.com - Germany, Interpunk.com - USA

Distro's: Active Rebellion, Smegma Records, Mild Peril, Punk Shit, R01DH

The Shadowcops



www.insrecords.co.uk

The Shadowcops

A Big Pot of Hot

DEBUT ALBUM

13.02.09

1. The Great Future Age
2. Punks
3. Brutal Day
4. The Deep End
5. Punks in Love
6. Blues
7. Punks in Love
8. The Age of Reason
9. The Great End
10. The Great End
11. Calling Out the Great
12. The Great End

TWOYE STONKING TRAKS OF PUNK ROCK 'N' ROLL WITH PUNKING UP, SEXUAL SOLOS AND ALL THE TIMEFUL TRAVELERS

We are delighted to confirm that the latest release on InsRecords will be this stonking 12 track debut album from the Shadowcops. These guys have put in some incredible performances at some of the TN's band nights and this recording captures the energy and riffage of their brilliant live shows.

This is a must for fans of the Wildhearts, Therapy?, Husker Du and the Replacements and fth, just anyone who likes and knows how to rock.

Pick up a copy for just £6 from the website at www.insrecords.co.uk or at any of the record shops/distro's listed opposite.

TNS

004

ROCKERS, MANCHESTER HAS MOVED

The Rockers clothing shop in Manchester has moved to a new location. It's now on Oldham Street (where Roadkill used to be until it was sadly forced to close down). They sell everything related to Rockabilly/Psychobilly clothes wise as well as much, much more.

There will also be a TNSDistro stand in the new shop so you can pick up CDs off our label and from lots, lots more bands and labels who we stock stuff for at very cheap prices! Check it out!

ROADKILL RECORDS, MANCHESTER

After ranting last issue about the importance of supporting underground record shops, I am sad to say that Roadkill in Manchester has had to close. It was a quality little shop for all things punk related and it is a real, real shame that it is no more. Cheers to everyone involved with Roadkill over the years and if you are reading this in another town or city, please try to support your own local store, before it meets a similar demise.



TNSRadio

TNSRadio is going to be the latest installment in the TNS family.

It's going to be a monthly podcast, which you will be able to download and subscribe to.

Cheers to Moz and Nathan for all the work they have put in on this project.

The podcast will have a different presenter each month playing the best of underground and more established punk, ska and related genres.

The launch of the podcast is really exciting news and hopefully you will all check it out.

It is available at www.tnsrecords.co.uk where you can listen to a 20 minute preview and also sign up for the first proper show, which will be out in February.

ROCK

www.ilovemanchestermusic.com

This is a new website and forum which will focus on news, reviews and interviews with local bands and artists as well as features on art, film and social life. This will be a superb resource for the local music community and the forums will provide opportunity for people to have their say about everything music related. So get involved and sign up asap! There will also be a TNS forum on here so it is the best way of keeping up with all our news too.

SNOW DAY

Not that I am complaining in any way, but I have had two days off work due to the snow this week. It's been incredibly useful for getting this fanzine started and to be honest, having a lie in, but it's absolutely crazy how a bit of bad weather seems to bring the country to a stand-still. Oh well, I'll get over it, with any luck there will be a few more 'free' days to dedicate to TNS over the next few months, or maybe we could have a mass snowball fight somewhere instead.

RECESSION

Not too long ago our politicians and major media outlets were denying the possibility of recession. Months down the line we are spiraling into what is now expected to be a long protracted recession at best. Hard to comprehend after 10 years of Gordon Brown gloating about how his economic wizardry had defied the basic laws of capitalism to end its 'boom and bust' cycles. The ditherings of Francis Fukuyama (wikipedia him if you haven't heard of him) and his claims that history had ended have only served to embarrass anyone that ever quoted them.

What the politicians didn't tell us over the last 10 years of economic 'prosperity' was that all we (The UK and the US) ever had – even in terms of a sound free market economy – was a phony consumer economy based on debt. In a nut shell – the only thing that has kept our economy afloat has been our banks borrowing a load of money from China, Russia, Japan, Saudi Arabia etc. to then lend on to us lot to spend on phones, clothes, TV's, kitchens and cars. Our whole economy has based itself on credit (lending) and without it we are well and truly screwed.

Our politicians and mainstream media are keen to blame this financial crisis on the 'credit crunch' but the expansion and contraction of credit is not the cause of our problems – it is an effect of our economic system. The bank bailouts are a blatant admission that free market economics have failed. The 'superiority' of private enterprise – that has been taught as gospel at our Universities and schools – is now nowhere to be seen. Cries from our governments that 'state intervention is the only way to save the market-economy' is a contradiction in terms.

So far the bank bailouts haven't worked – the banks have stashed the money under their beds and (against government orders) won't lend to each other. If the credit system seizes up so will the capitalist system. Gordon Brown has warned us that in 2009 things will get tougher – how much tougher no one can really tell. But one thing for sure is that our political leaders have a tendency to underplay how bad things are going to be (first they denied there would be recession, then they claimed it would remain in America, then they said it would be global but short term, now they're saying it will be a protracted one). Our politicians have proven to be nothing but representatives of big business and the big bankers and don't think twice about feeding us a line and fobbing us off.

The rapidity with which events are taking place is taking everyone by surprise. We will be entering into a period of high unemployment, home repossessions and loss of livelihoods. Globally we are entering a period of the end of US dominance and escalation in violence in the Middle East and Pakistan/India. The political elites of Europe have been terrified by the fear that widespread civil unrest in Greece these last few weeks will spread. Very worrying and unprecedented times.

2009 will bring social conditions similar to those in 70's Britain that helped spawn punk rock and its inherently political, anti-establishment and counter culture nature. Historically art tends to become more politicised during economic down-turns but the form and forum of punk should be taking the lead in addressing these issues. The fact that in a recession the working and middle classes are asked to tighten their belts and buckle-up while the rich only have to stress about their profit margins should be first on the punk agenda. How to deal with these imbalances should be thrashed out within the punk community as a matter of duty.

03/01/09

Mike Corrigan

PAY TO PLAY

I'm gonna have to be really careful about how I approach talking about this, because lots of people have very strong opinions about these pay to play deals that lots of promoters in Manchester and across the UK seem to use. However, I really felt the need to discuss it a little and to hopefully make people aware of how certain promoters are ripping off bands and gig goers. Pretty much every band has played these sort of gigs in the past (including my own, I must admit), but these gigs really are ruining any sense of unity in the music scene.

So what is a Pay to Play gig?

Basically it is when a promoter of a gig says to bands they want to book that they have to sell a certain amount of tickets for a gig if they are to get paid or booked again. The band does get to keep some of the money if they sell say 20/30 tickets; but they are also expected to hand over the rest to the so called promoter (who doesn't seem to think promoting their own gig is up to them) on arrival at the gig and if they don't reach the allocation receive nothing.

A typical deal would be something where a band was perhaps told to sell 25 tickets at £5. They would keep £2 off each ticket (a £50 profit) and the promoter would keep £75. Now I've heard some bands say they like this because they will always make money if they have a local following, but these are the main reasons I believe these deals to be wrong.

1) However, you look at it you ARE paying to play the gig. It should not be your responsibility to sell all the tickets for your gig and however much money you are given for selling tickets you are only getting that money for selling tickets, not in any way because you are a good band. Whatever way you look at it, you are handing over a sum of money to a promoter who has sat on their arse doing absolutely fuck all to make your gig decent.

I am certainly not saying that a band should have no responsibility to push the night, of course they should and if they do not promote it they can not complain about a small crowd. However, promoters and bands really should be working together. All parties should be responsible for handing out flyers. By all means give the bands tickets to sell, but do not tell them they have to sell them in order to get paid or to get another gig. Any ticket a band sells should be a bonus to the promoter, or a favour, rather than an obligation.

I believe out of town bands should always be guaranteed petrol money (I'll come to out of town bands shortly) and also that local bands should be paid if this is possible (although local bands shouldn't always expect to be paid for local gigs) and I also believe that if the gig is a success the money should be spread in a fair way, but it seems to me promoters are booking bands who command a fee as their headliner and just booking support bands so that they will sell ticket allocations and they will pay for the promoters fee and the bigger band, which is crap.

2) The implications of doing these sorts of deals are not immediately obvious but are certainly detrimental to the gig and the music scene in general. These deals do not encourage gigs to actually have good bands/decent line ups.

We are all very aware that the best bands at an unsigned level are not necessarily the ones who can get the most fans/mates to come to the gig. For example (and I mean no offence to these types of bands) if a band is made up of students or people who work in guitar shops, etc they are surely always going to be able to encourage more people to come along than a band who just work in everyday jobs. From my own experience I know that I could always get loads of 'friends' to watch my band when I was at university and that it is more difficult these days.

Also, how is an unsigned band from outside of your town supposed to sell 30 odd tickets however brilliant they might actually be? Surely we should be encouraging bands to play as far and wide as possible, but they just can't go and play in another town on one of these deals.

These gigs simply do not encourage good out of town bands to play in your town.

3) These deals encourage very strange line ups. Bands who sound similar, will often have mutual friends or encourage similar sorts of people to a gig so often these promoters will put on a set of bands who clearly do not work as a line up. Therefore you get people coming to see their friends band rather than the gig as a whole. I'm all for a bit of diversity but an indie crowd is unlikely to want to watch a metal band so are unlikely to stay after the first few chords, if they even bother to listen at all. So what you get is a night where 25 people watch a mates band, leave, then another 25 arrive and so on and so on. What sort of a gig is that?

Why can't you go to a gig to see all the bands? Why do these promoters need you to state who you are there to watch? There is therefore no feeling of a 'whole gig' and no sense of unity between the bands.

It almost becomes like a battle of the bands with everyone battling for the best slots in some sort of ticket selling race and I am sure we all think battle of the bands are the biggest pile of bullshit in the world (but that is another rant for another time). My point is music should not be a competition at any level, but particularly not at an unsigned gig. If you want a competition go and watch pop idol.

4) Overall, these gigs just encourage lazy money grabbing promoters who can sit on their arses doing no promotion but picking up a pay packet. They are putting your band on mainly to make themselves money and they may not even rate you all that much. These people have no place in any music scene and in my opinion, they can fuck right off!

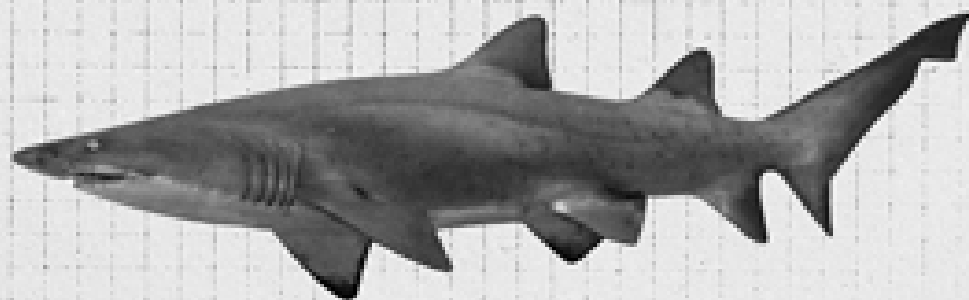
So what can be done?

There really is no need for bands to play these sort of gigs at all. Particularly in the punk and ska scene, there are genuine promoters all over the country, who are putting bands on they actually like and working with the bands to try and put on good gigs, often for no financial gain. In Manchester we have the Slit Records, the Collective, Bomb Ibiza, Say It to My Face, Rockers, BD7 Punk, Jake, Voodoo, Marios, Uberwang, Amplifire Promo and I'd like to include ourselves and further a field we have GASH, OMDfungulpunk and Cotty (sorry if I've missed anyone) putting on punk/ska/hardcore/rockabilly gigs and there are also lots more good promoters in other genres I am not as familiar with.

Some of these nights do have long waiting lists so if you can't get on one of these nights immediately why not do it yourself (which is how many of the above nights started). Just get four like minded bands to club together for room/pa hire (which can be fairly cheap), print a fuck load of flyers on a 2p photocopier and have a laugh. If you get 50 people down between you and charge £3 in you'll cover costs and even make a bit of cash, without ripping off your mates to line someone else's pocket. You can also gig with bands you actually like and would enjoy playing with and maybe even offer gig swaps to out of town bands you want people to hear.

So apologies for ranting, especially to those of you who are very aware of this problem and would avoid these gigs at all costs, I hate to preach to the converted and all that.

If all bands in all genres stopped playing these nights the Idiots will stop making money and be forced to either reassess their deals, or probably the more likely scenario, go and try to make easy money somewhere else. Rant over!



STUFF I THINK IS MINT

After the rant about pay to play I felt the need to be a bit positive about things that are good, partly so I don't come across as a completely negative bastard and partly because I genuinely wanted to recommend some stuff I really like.

So I'll start with fanzines. I love fanzines. I love the idea of an underground network where like minded people can share ideas about allsorts, such as art, politics, food, recommending bands, gigs and lots, lots more. I also love the idea that a fanzine is a personal viewpoint or even diary of someone who is really passionate about something presented in an individual way. FACT: fanzines are better than big music magazines!

So here are some I really like: Mild Peril – Norwich, Beat Motel – Ipswich, Lights Go Out – Reading, Burnout – Blackburn, Second City – Manchester, A Short Fanzine About Rocking – London/Manchester. There are many, many more which I regularly read so I apologise if I have missed any, but fanzines are an area I am really trying to build up in our distro so most of the above are available at any TNS gigs. If you run a zine, get in touch. Fanzines are so vital to this subculture so try to support them as I guarantee you will discover great new bands and find them thought provoking.

The Manchester music scene: Things are so good at the moment for small gigs. I've listed some of the amazing promoters in the area in the pay to play bit, but there literally are so many great gigs that I couldn't come close to doing justice to how much is going on, but I will touch on some things I have been to or plan to go to in the coming months.

Our good friends at Bomb Ibiza do Ska Bar at Retro Bar on the last Sunday of the month. It's always a great atmosphere and I've heard so many good bands there. They also do loads of awesome one off gigs. Their listings are in this fanzine.

Dean at Silt Records is putting on some brilliant stuff too, perhaps more on the crust side of the genre. His recent Inner Terrestrials gig was brilliant and he along with Steve at Ageless Chaps (who has been putting top gigs on for years) are hosting the return of the Dead Pets at the Star and Garter on 9th April, which should be mint.

The Collective have been putting on some really good bands and have recently bought the likes of the Down and Outs and the Steal to Manchester. Collective and Silt gigs are always listed on the ilovemanchestermusic.com forum so there is another reason to sign up.

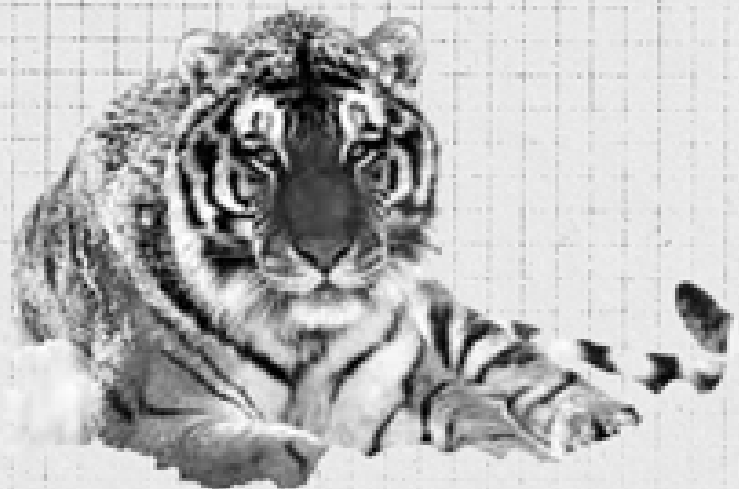
Phil is putting on Strummer Camp again this year on May 22/23/24. This is a quality DIY festival, which we hope to be heavily involved with so I'll talk more about this next issue. Look out for one off Strummer Camp gigs too.

Further a field, Cotty from the Emo's puts on regular gigs at the Dog and Partridge in Bolton, which are also listed on the forum and QMD at www.fungalpunknature.co.uk is putting on a three day punk festival at the Thatched House in Stockport (16/17/18 Jan), which will be dirt cheap and be packed with new bands so check out the listings on his site.

We really are just spoilt for choice when it comes to live music!

Again, sorry to anyone I've missed, but again, feel free to get in touch and lets hope these nights go from strength to strength in 2009.

Andy



CHECK THESE BANDS OUT

There are some pretty great unsigned or indie signed bands that I think are awesome. Here are 5 local-ish heroes that you should probably check out.

1. **Wolf Cry Wolf:** I used to be in a really shit emo band called Cuts And Stars and the best thing about this band was the drummer Danny. After we disbanded Danny joined a bunch of different bands with varying degrees of awesome and even more varying degrees of success. One of them was It Awakes, who were grimy death metal influenced. Another was Ante Meridian, who played a sort of funk influenced post hardcore rock somewhere between Primus and At The Drive In. Danny's best post C&S band are easily Wolf Cry Wolf, who rock a southern rock Pantera vs ETID vs King Of Leon sound. It sounds a bit odd but it really works. The first ep they released with previous singer was very ETID but still pretty great. It is available for download on their myspace. It is definitely also worth checking out their two latest tracks, the new vocalist Tom Naylor clearly has more eclectic influences. It is just great. These are the black sheep of this list.

2. **Hammers:** I reviewed a show of theirs a few blogs down, and cannot shout about them enough. Dirty, dirgy and dingy guitars splashed all over guttural vocals and double time off beats just make me so happy. Surfing the wave of d-beat at the moment, this band seem to be similar enough to be awesome with enough separating them from the current crap to maintain longevity. I am expecting pretty big things from this one.

3. **WExHAPPENExNEXT:** Yeah, yeah... Those prolific Hommers boys again, on top of Hammers and Hail Brethren they still find to come up with this fast awesomeness. Featuring the guitarist and drummer from Hammers/Hail Brethren playing fastcore type powerviolent thrash punk. Listen through the whole session on the myspace, it is easily as great as Scholastic Deth and their ilk. I cannot wait to hear this live. I hate to bum two virtual strangers so much, but when they churn out stuff like this it is nigh on impossible to resist.

4. **Broken Teeth:** "Fucking fuckers" yells Dale on Teethtro, this isn't a band for the faint hearted pop punk kids. This is real punk hardcore brutality. Playing sloppy, loud and just for the fuck of it, it is clear this bunch of guys really couldn't give two shits what you think about them or their band. I saw these support DeeZ Nuts a month or so back and they just blew me away. Sit down with a nice cup of milky tea and blow your ear drums out.

5. **Jonathan Ross:** Are these the fastest band in Manchester? They are certainly my favourite. Kicking out fastcore jams like some sort of thrash machine. Infest is obviously a key influence and a badge they wear with pride. I haven't got to see these live yet, but the day when I do will certainly be a joyous one. These on a split with WxHxN would equal Manchester fast gold.

Dangerous Jamie (Blog at: <http://endlessbummer.wordpress.com/>)



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STAND OUT RIOT

NEW MILLS SKA-CORE

Stand Out Riot are one the most exciting young bands in the North West at the moment and 2009 could be a huge year for them. Their ska-core sound can be compared to Capdown, but there is a bit of Gogol Bordello in there too. With a fresh and exciting sound combined with great musicianship, Stand Out Riot are a must hear for any ska fan.

TNS) You have just recorded your debut album, 'Carnival Militia'. What can people who are new to the band expect from this release? How did the recording go and are you pleased with the results?

Francis: Expect a frenetic and eclectic mix of ska, punk, gypsy and hardcore, spread over 8 tracks, played as fast and as loud as possible.

We're very pleased, especially with the work Tim has done on all the songs. It sounds bigger than we ever thought it could.

Will: Yeah, many thanks for Tim for being so patient with us, throughout the whole project. I doubt there are many producers that could put up with having to record so many instruments, especially with all our demands.

TNS) With so many band members, was it difficult to record? How difficult is it for you to gig, write new songs and practise with so many people involved?

Will: It can be hard co-ordinating all eight of us, but we seem to do pretty well considering we're spread over 5 counties.

Ste: For the run up to the album we wrote and practiced parts in two groups; rhythm section and brass section, which made it easier to share ideas and smooth over little details that most people wouldn't notice, but it means a lot to us to make everything as tight as possible.

Ben: We never take the band too seriously, and we are all good friends, so it's never a problem getting everyone together. Gigs and practising have always been the same, we all love being in the band and doing as many gigs as we can and writing the best music we can.

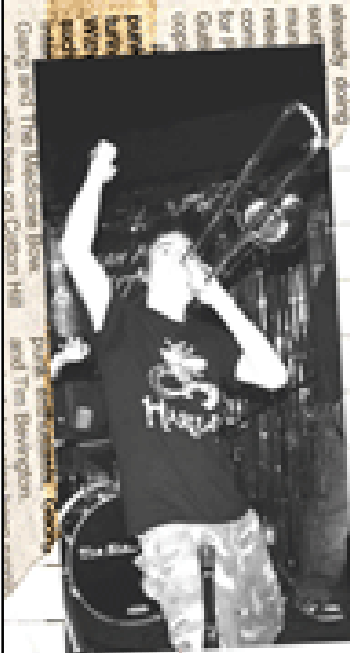
TNS) What are the main themes of the album lyrically? There seems to be a bit of a political undertone. Is this something that is important to you?

Francis: The whole album has underlying theme of anti-fascism and anti-consumerism, which is definitely very important to us. Some songs obviously carry this message, like The Monstrous Cabaret, which is about the all-powerful fashion and cosmetics industry, and some are more subtly, such as Spacesuit, which is about generally making the most of your life and not getting tied down by a daily routine.

STAND
OUT
RIOT

debut album
'Carnival
Militia'
out now





TNS) One of the things that really stands out on the album is how technically good at their instruments the band are (I'm sure I even saw one of you with sheet music once haha). Are you all classically trained and if so how do you think this effects your sound in terms of playing ska-core?

Francis: We've all done (or are still doing) our GCSE/A levels in Music, so we all know all the theory and stuff behind what we're playing. And yes, we write all our songs on sheet music (!) which is a massive help when trying to arrange parts for the brass/violin. A full score gives you much more control.

Will: With this album we've tried to bring together all our different influences, and I think that comes through in our songs. There's massive range of styles mixed in there; some more obvious than others. We're still learning and we always try and push ourselves as we've played over the years so that we just don't churn out recycled ideas.



TNS) Where do you plan to go from here in order to promote the album? Is there a tour planned in the near future?

Ben: We've just done an album launch gig which was a lot of fun and have a number of gigs lined up to basically get out and about, and play our music to as many people as we can.

Ste: Yeah, we're taking practically every gig we are offered at the moment and trying to put a tour together at the moment for next summer.

TNS) What do you think about underground UK music in general at the moment? What are the best and worst bits in this 'scene' at the moment?

Francis: The best bits of the scene can be seen by going down to the Retro Bar on a Sunday afternoon, to watch local bands playing in front big supportive crowds, week after week. That's what it's all about.

The worst thing is bands that put their fashion before their music. I'm pretty open-minded to most styles of music; but no matter how awesome your vintage guitar, tight trousers and Morrissey-esque fringe look, if your going to play a set without any passion for the music, I'm not interested.



TNS) And finally, what would you ultimately see as a success for the band?

Francis: We played at the Attic last night, and at the end of our set, a man who I'd never met before came up to me, gave me a massive hug, and said that he thought our set was awesome. Now we'd all love to be famous and roll around in our hot-tubs full of cash, but at the end of the day, if our music can make a grown man want to hug a complete stranger (a stranger dripping in sweat, no less) then that's success enough for us.

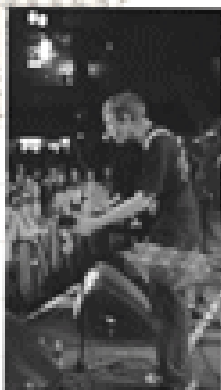
Andy

THE FRACTIONS

ROCHDALE MELODIC PUNK WITH HORNS

SHOWTIMES

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BLUJ
THE FRACTIONS:
BLUJ + 07.20
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THE FRACTIONS have been playing their mix of ska punk on the local scene since 2003. In November the band scored their best slot yet as support for Rancid on the Sheffield date of their UK tour. About to embark on another tour of their own, I caught up with Graeme and Martin to find out what the band have planned for 2009 and what it was really like meeting Tim Armstrong...

TNS: It's nearly 6 years since you played your first gig as The Fractions. How do you feel you have changed since then?

MJ: Over the years since I have been in the band I think the sound has developed and come along leaps and bounds. All our tastes in music have changed and I think we have applied those influences to the sound of our band well and our individual styles have progressed along with it. I think overall we have created a fairly unique sound within a sea of generic sounding punk bands!

Graeme: We started off playing 3/4 chord ska songs and a few covers. We've had a fair few members come and go, mainly being brass, which meant different people in the band brought different influences in.

TNS: Would you encourage other younger bands just starting out to get involved with community projects like The Backdoor Project? How did they help you to get started?

MJ: When I first joined the band we were doing bits of recordings with the Backdoor Project - which for those who don't know is a dedicated bunch of folks based in Rochdale that help young people to create their own music and put on gigs for kids to attend. It's definitely helpful for bands to get involved with projects like this when they're first starting out.

Graeme: Yeah for sure. It was one of their workshops where I met the rest of the band and started to write songs. Before that it was just playing guitar with a mate at their house. We still go back and play for the backdoor project from time to time. It keeps us from feeling too old!

TNS: If you could describe yourself as any genre mix nowadays what would it be? (Bearing in mind Lily Allen has recently described herself as SKA...)

MJ: I wouldn't like to put all our eggs in one genre basket. Trying not to sound like a massive tit, I think we transcend genres. Our sound is definitely based in punk but draws influence from ska, dancehall, ragga and hip-hop. If I was to stick down a few bands that have had a big effect on us I'd have to plump for Leatherface, with whom it was a massive pleasure to play alongside, and Hot Water Music.

Graeme: If Lily Allen is claiming to be ska we might as well take her crown and be cockney pop.

TNS: Supporting Rancid in Sheffield last year must have been amazing. Was it something you ever dreamt of when you first started out and what did it feel like to share a stage with them?

MJ: It was surreal. I remember on our way in we were greeted by Tim Armstrong. We shook hands with him and a couple of other members of the band - they were really nice. Watching them sound check was out of this world and they dedicated Time Bomb to us! Awesome.

Graeme: To be honest I never thought we would play with a band that big or in a venue that size. I've always been a big fan of Rancid and when the tour advert was in Kerrang and we were listed on it too - it kind of hit home how big a deal it was for us to get the support slot. We met all of the band and they were really nice guys. Matt Freeman watched our set from side of stage and came and talked to me after we played. It was crazy, but one of the best nights of my life.

photo by bev



TNS: Your planned UK tour at Easter looks like the best yet – where are you most excited about playing, and do you have any past favourite cities where you tend to get a good reaction?

MJ: I'm looking forward to Scotland and a chance to visit our buddies The Hijacks.

(www.myspace.com/hijackska) Aberdeen and Edinburgh are awesome places to go- but it's always nice to be home in Manchester! Those dates should be fun too.

Graeme: Yeah this tour there will be a fair few dates in Scotland, which if its anything like last time is going to be top. Aberdeen has been a good place for us in the past and I'm looking forward to playing some new places too

TNS: As a band or individuals do you have any other favourite UK bands that you think are leading the way at the minute?

Graeme: Some of my top UK bands are the Great St Louis, Millay, 3 minute warning, Harlan and Smoke Like A Fish. That's off the top of my head. If I had a good hour to sit down and think I'd probably come up with a list of about 20 bands

MJ: The punk scene is definitely thriving at the moment and we've had the chance to play alongside some class acts. Millay, The Cost Of Living and Stand Out Riot are some of my favourites.

TNS: What can we expect from The Fractions in 2009? Got any plans to record again any time soon?

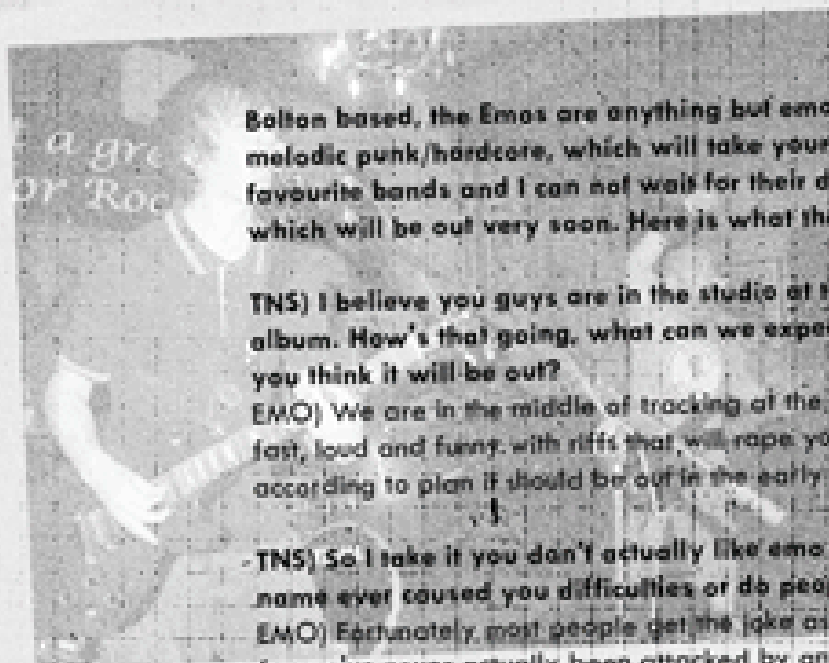
Graeme: We're on tour from 27th march until 5th April, which I can't wait for. As for recordings, 2009 will see the release of our full length debut album. We're going to demo a few tracks in Jan/Feb, send them off to labels and see what happens from that. Then record the rest of the album shortly after. Once the album is released we will be doing a lot more gigs and getting as much feedback as possible.

MJ: Hopefully a lot more gigs and a lot more drunken tomfoolery. I think we have truly outdone ourselves with recent writing for our debut album and we are all looking forward to laying down our ideas on record!

Sam

THE EMOS

BOLTON PUNK ROCK



Bolton based, the Emos are anything but emo. In fact they play fast paced melodic punk/hardcore, which will take your face off. They are one of my favourite bands and I can not wait for their debut album 'Quicker than Khan', which will be out very soon. Here is what they had to say.

TNS) I believe you guys are in the studio at the moment recording your debut album. How's that going, what can we expect from it sound wise and when do you think it will be out?

EMO) We are in the middle of tracking at the moment, we are hoping for it to be fast, loud and funny, with riffs that will rape your mum. If everything goes according to plan it should be out in the early stages of February.

TNS) So I take it you don't actually like emo all that much. Has your band name ever caused you difficulties or do people in general get the joke?

EMO) Fortunately most people get the joke as soon as they hear the music and so far we've never actually been attacked by any fringes demanding their money back. We do get the odd promoter who has to double check before we go on though, just to make sure they aren't going to need to stock up on anti-depressants behind the bar!

TNS) You are involved in putting on gigs yourselves. What are the pros and cons of this? How important do you think it is for bands to put on gigs themselves and how important is it for you to encourage new bands to Bolton?

EMO) The best thing about gigs that have been put on by bands is that there are generally a lot of top quality bands on the bill and that the promoter will do their best to give money to the bands. Obviously, as you know yourselves, putting on gigs puts a serious strain on your own wallet and you're never guaranteed the strong crowd that the night ultimately deserves. It's important for us to try and encourage bands to come to Bolton, or anywhere out of their comfort zone really, as if they impress even just one person in a new town then that gig can surely be deemed a success.



TNS) It seems to have been quite a busy year for the band and you look set to get even busier. What have been the highlights of the last year or so and what have you got planned for the future. Will there be a tour to coincide with the album release?
EMO) In June we got back together for the third time due to writing a song about our favourite takeaway (K2 in Bolton!!) and it all just carried on from that point. Since we got back together we wrote 6 new songs, rewrote the majority of the old songs and decided to play more gigs outside of Bolton. The highlight of the year so far is probably a gig we played in Colwyn Bay because we got to go somewhere we had never been before and rock out with Revenge of...! The night was put on in a really cool venue by a really cool promoter (North Wales Punk Rock). In the new year we are looking at releasing our album "Quicker Than Khan" and to do a tour in February starting at the Retro Bar in Manchester on the 1st February. After that we'll be writing new material ready for a strong end to 2009

TNS) How healthy do you think the UK underground music scene is in general at the moment?

We are all into different styles of music from Sleaze Rock, Post-Rock and Punk and within all the scenes we think the problems are the same. The bands are good enough but the UK is saturated with shit promoters, inadequate venues and too sporadic an attendance. Fortunately there are enough good promoters in towns and cities all round the country to make sure the scene is thriving if you know where to look

TNS) What would you ultimately see as a success for the band?

EMO) For people to laugh at our in-jokes.....and to be accepted as part of the clique.

TNS) Anyone can join this clique, you are in!

Andy

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DO THE DOG MUSIC

INDEPENDENT UK SKA LABEL AND FANZINE

Do the Dog Records are one of the best independent UK record labels, with a brilliant back catalogue, which just keeps getting better. I had a chat with label boss, Kevin Flowerdew about how it's all going.

TNS) I believe it is over a decade since Do the Dog started now and you have 39 releases. How did it all start and what did you plan to do with the label when you started it?

Kev) Yup Its coming up to the 13th anniversary of the label in 2009. It all started back in 1996 with an international ska compilation CD release to celebrate the 50th issue of Rude skazine. I had been doing Rude zine since 1989. The compilation was titled "Rude Vibes" & featured ska bands from all over the globe who had appeared in the zine including Intensified, Ruder Than You, Skankin Pickle, The Porkers, Secret Cajun Band, The Kingpins, MU330, The Peacocks & Unsteady amongst others. When I put out the "Rude Vibes" CD it was only actually supposed to be a one off release, but because I enjoyed putting the album together, working on the artwork, promoting the release, selling it, etc I decided to carry on with the label & try to bring more exposure to the UK ska scene.

TNS) Did you expect to still be doing the label now? What have been the highlights? Do you have some particular favourite releases and why?

Kev) No I never expected the label to still be going strong after 2 years let alone 12 years! To be honest I knew nothing about running a record label 'properly', I have pretty much made it up myself as I went along & am still doing so now! There have been loads of highlights along the way. Just holding my first CD release in my own hands was a really big buzz after planning it for so long. Selling Do The Dog CD's to ska fans all over the globe has been really cool, as has getting radio airplay for the bands on ska radio shows all around the world. Probably the biggest highlight for me personally was the Do The Dog Music 10th Anniversary Bash at the Camden Underworld a few years ago, when Smoke Like A Fish, Too Many Crooks, Rebelation, Splitters, Skylar, Catch It Kebabs & 3 Minute Warning all played blinding sets in front of a packed & sweaty venue. I don't really have any particular favourite Do The Dog release - I love them all!

TNS) How has the ska scene changed since the label began?

Kev) The UK ska scene seems to keep evolving & changing over the years which I think is great for its continued survival. When the label started in 1996 there were very few ska/punk bands in England (the only one that I knew of at the time was The Write Offs from Yorkshire), it was only 2 tone style bands & some 60's style trad bands around then. Then of course came the explosion of ska/punk bands thanks to the success in the States of Less Than Jake, Reel Big Fish, Rancid, Mighty Mighty Bosstones & many more which led to endless numbers of new ska/punk bands. More recently the ska/punk scene seems to be thinning out a bit & US bands like The Aggrolites, Chris Murray & The Slackers seem to be inspiring a more old school movement amongst new bands coming through. Overall the ska scene today is probably one of the most diverse music scenes around with laid back reggae/ska bands under the same big genre umbrella as hard hitting angry skacore bands.

TNS) How important are labels such as Do the Dog to the UK underground ska scene? How difficult is it being a smaller label financially, time wise and in terms of promoting the bands?

Key) All of the ska scenes around the globe have great labels that help bring through new ska talent (like Jump Up Records in the USA, Grover Records & Mad Butcher Records in Germany, Liquidator Records in Spain, Patate Records in France, AMTY Records in Sweden, Ska In The World Records in Japan & Sound System Records in Australia), so I think it is very important to have a label like Do The Dog here in the UK to help do the same, ie. help cool upcoming bands move from playing just local shows to getting exposure all over the UK & beyond. Yeah being a small DIY one man ska label means I'm always struggling with money to the extent that I would like to, but I keep plugging along under my own steam!

TNS) How do you think download culture has affected record labels in general and how has the internet helped and hindered Do the Dog?

Key) To be honest I don't really know too much about download culture, I've not really taken to it yet. I much prefer to have an actual product in my hand with some artwork to read, rather than another download on my iPod, so Do The Dog hasn't entered the digital download arena yet. From what I have seen of other ska labels around the globe the digital download era seems to be killing them off if anything! The one big positive internet wise for Do The Dog Music however has been Myspace!!! Starting up a Do The Dog Myspace page has enabled me to link up with huge new numbers of ska bands, labels & promoters from all over the world & also to reach loads more new customers to buy Do The Dog Music CD's & come to Do The Dog band's gigs! I love Myspace!!!

TNS) How do you pick the bands who you work with? Presumably you are inundated with demos. How important is it for the bands to work closely with you in order to push their releases?

Key) Pretty much the only thing that steers me towards picking a band to work with through the label is the songs; If I love the songs I will ask the band to join the label simple as that! Yeah it is great for bands to work closely with me & play lots of shows to help promote their releases, but if I really love the band there are exceptions to this (like Honeyshop Screamers who had already split up before they sent me their demo & Skylar who I knew only got together to play shows very seldom - I loved the songs of these 2 bands so much that I felt I had to release them anyway!).

TNS) As you know we have recently started our own label. What would your advice be for any new label within the UK punk and ska scene?

Key) My only real advice for new labels would be to only work with bands that you really love & respect, & be really passionate & positive about what you are doing, promoting & releasing. If you are really passionate about the label & the bands chances are other people will be too.

TNS) And finally can you push the latest Do the Dog releases to our readers? Who are they by and what can people expect from them sound wise?

Key) I'm actually really excited about the next 2 new releases due out soon on the label by Cartoon Violence & Jimmy The Squirrel! Cartoon Violence is the new side project formed by 3 Minute Warning keyboardist Chuzz. They are a 4 piece band from Wales & they play an insanely catchy brand of 2 tone ska interwoven with distinctly British sounding pop & indie stylings. Their debut album, "Whatever Happened To The Likely Lad" should be out just before Christmas. Jimmy The Squirrel are an amazing ska/reggae crew from Nottingham who tunes are full of smoothly flowing rhythms & uplifting soulful vocals. They have been recording their debut full length album down in Bristol with Pama International's Sean Flowerdew (my little brother no less!) handling production duties. The album should be out early in the New Year.

Andy

JOHN PLAYER SPECIALS – IDENTIFICATION EP (Do the Dog Music)

When we released the Harijan/John Player Specials split through TNS last year we really hoped that both bands would move on to bigger and better things, so we were very happy that JPS got picked up by a label we really respect, Do the Dog a few months ago.

This is a re-released version of their debut ep and all 5 tracks showcase their chilled out reggae/ska sound. Powerful vocals, sing-a-long choruses and even a bit of uke give these guys a distinctive sound and the recent edition of a second guitar has really added to their live sound, so I look forward to an album sometime soon.

Of the tracks on offer here, 'Knocking on Wood' and 'The Future of Tomorrow' are already big live favourites, but it's a darker edge of 'Written in Stone', which appeals most to me and also offers the strongest brass parts. Good stuff from a band with the potential to really go a long way.

Andy

THE SKINTS – S/T EP (Do the Dog Music)

This is one of my favourite recent releases, with six tracks tuneful of ska/reggae. It's actually a bit hard to pigeon hole this lot as all six tracks tackle a slightly different side of the whole ska sound, with a lot of variation from a quite two-tone sound right through to the almost funk guitars of 'Jungle Plane Wreck' and the more reggae sounding 'Sociopath'. At first this variation sounded a little disjointed, but with more listens I became more familiar with the songs and the contrasting sounds really showcase how good this band is. Personal taste means that the more punky sounds of 'N55' and in particular, 'Little Flag' were my personal highlights, but all six tracks are good and I look forward to hearing these songs live.

Andy

21st December 08 – Retro Bar The Honeymoon Suite, Drive Like I Do, Inflight, The Nightlife Crisis, Laidback Legends.

The first band on tonight is Laidback Legends. Despite the late start they manage to pick up the mood and soon enough the whole room is dancing away. Musically their first song is amazing – a mix of catchy riffs and wholesome vocals, but after this all the songs sound a bit too similar. A good start nonetheless.

Next up The Nightlife Crisis take me by surprise with the front man's strong vocals mixed nicely into light melodic indie power pop. The occasional dual vocals are fantastic. Songs such as "Running with Scissors" and "A Boy Who Likes A Girl" really shine through as those chilled out acoustic tracks perfect for a sunny day's drive – I personally will be playing their CD well into the summer.

Third band Inflight takes the gig to a whole new genre level with their deeper, darker pop punk sound. An infusion of bass lines and spacey effects makes for a heavier set than those previous and the band seems to have made a good impression on the growing crowd. The only criticism stems from the unenthusiastic vocals midway through the set, but the new song at the end brings back the excitement and passion.

When Drive Like I Do take to the stage the room is bustling with a range of characters, but somehow the band manage to deliver something to please everyone. The atmospheric and semi-acoustic tracks are instantly catchy and the charismatic front man has most of the room singing the words in no time.

However there is no confusion here tonight that the band everyone has come to see is The Honeymoon Suite. Jumping (quite literally) into "A Crowd Full Of Pockets" I see a slightly more mature edge to the band than in previous years. The riffs are just about as well coordinated as the synchronised bounces around the tiny stage. You cannot appreciate this band without being witness to their playful onstage banter and mid-song, flawless crowd interaction. The main highlight is "Fly Flight Crow" which shows just how much passion this band really have. Stunning vocals leave you wanting more and last track "Matrimony" wholly satisfies, ending the evening in complete style.

Sam

REVIEWS

CARTOON VIOLENCE – WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE LIKELY LAD (Do the Dog Music)

This is the debut release from Welsh four piece and 3 Minute Warning side project, Cartoon Violence. The presence of 3 Minute Warning keyboardist Chazz is immediately obvious as the keys are such an important part of the bands sound. There are undertones of 3MW in the sound, but this CD, particularly in the second half is a bit darker. My personal favourites and perhaps the best showcases of this slightly dark edge are 'Cartoon Violence' and 'Rattlesnake'.

There is a bit of variety on offer as the opening two tracks are much more pop biased than the later songs, with a bit of an indie feel in an Ordinary Boys sort of way or maybe even a bit of Chas n' Dave. But the whole offering definitely has it's roots in two tone ska. Overall, although there are definitely tracks which will stand out depending on how you prefer your ska to be delivered, this is certainly a very good debut CD, which I have been listening to a hell of a lot, so pick yourself up a copy for a bargain £7 from DTD.

Andy

THE BRONX – THE BRONX (White Drugs)

This is the third self titled album from one of my favourite bands. I always think the Bronx have never really developed a particular audience. A lot of punk fans find them too rock and a lot of rock fans find them to punk and I suppose it's this that has perhaps stopped them from being huge. But why categorise them? As far as I am concerned, they just rock. An extra guitar has given extra balls to their live sound, which tends to be much more hardcore than they are recorded and this album, like the two that came before it is packed full of consistently rocking tracks, full of big riffs and hardcore yet melodic vocals. This album is solid from start to finish, but my personal favourites were the faster tracks such as 'Ship High in Transit' and final track, 'Digital Leath. Definitely one of my favourite albums of 2008. Andy

LOS SALVADORES – ATTACK OF THE CLONES (Corndog)

This is definitely one of the best and most original albums I heard last year.

It's just got something a bit different about it, which makes you sit up and take notice right from the opening keys followed by crashing guitar chords of first track 'Leviathan'. There is a bit of the Levellers and maybe some Gogol Bordello thrown in, it's basically folk music made punk. Imagine big riffs, catchy choruses but with bits of mandolin and banjo thrown in and you won't be far off the mark. The other thing that stands out is the consistency of the album. It's one of those, that if I had space I could discuss each track individually. However, I don't have space so I'll just draw attention to my favourites, which are very catchy and almost swing-esque, 'My Coloured Town', the gypsy-folk inspired 'You Spoke, You Missed' and the riff filled 'The Wig'.

Very impressive stuff, which I urge anyone who likes a folk edge to their punk rock to check out soon. Definitely a band I want to see live in 2009! Andy

The Attic – December 4th 08 – Stand Out Riot, The Minions, The Shadowcops.

First up tonight are The Shadowcops and their instant energy gets the small crowd up to the front. The band are noticeably making an impact on the local scene having played more and more shows in the city over recent months and tonight they are on top form despite the early slot. Songs such as "Putsch" and "My My My Personal Ennui" guarantee full satisfaction from a band on the verge of releasing their first full length album. There is a distinct lack of my personal favourite song "Folie A Deux" but with such a massive catalogue of songs to choose from its no surprise that The Shadowcops still manage to impress with their quirky riffs and occasional sporadic dance moves.

Next up Bolton's finest The Minions (formerly of Jeffrey) take the stage and half of the dance floor into a whirlwind frenzy of dual vocals and twin trumpets. They belt out tune after tune of fast paced punk rock, "Mooching" being a favourite with its layers of brass making up entirely for a slight lack of enthusiasm behind the vocals tonight. Latest single track "Six Chords" finishes the set on a new tempo and the deep lyrics show a more mature side from a band that have been playing the same material for a few years now. I can only hope that they continue to write more of the good stuff!

Headline act Stand Out Riot are launching their first album tonight. They begin with bouncy "Selfution" which combines politically inclined lyrics with addictive guitar solos, violin and a whole load of brass. The youthful charisma of the band provides an onstage presence to rival most major signed acts. "The Monstrous Cabaret" is another carefully constructed song capable of getting the whole room dancing whereas "Playing With Hammers" reaches out to a heavier side of the genre – whatever that may be. Extra sax and guitar solos mix well with a chorus you are guaranteed to want to sing along to. The band finish on a high with "Spacesuit" and this is by far the most exciting track on the album, performed even better live with the whole band joining in for group vocals. They have come a long way from line-up changes and constant experimentation within genres but there is no doubt that 2009 will be the time to catch Stand Out Riot at their best! Sam

REVIEWS

ZEEB - GARGANTUAN ROCK MONSTER (Comdog)

I enjoyed this latest offering from Zeeb. It's honest punk rock which is well executed, with an American edge to the sound at times, which is apparent in opener 'Chainsaw Lurve', which offers some decent harmonies and perhaps an inkling of a rock n roll edge. 'Drinkin' Gasoline' has a bit of Formaldehyde years Terrorvision to it and there were moments throughout that reminded me of Bradfords finest in their early days. But this album is actually quite varied throughout, with some fast bits and some good riffs scattered around the nine 'proper' songs. You could perhaps criticise it lyrically, but I suspect there is a tongue planted in the bands collective cheeks, so I won't. I enjoyed forwarding through 8 minutes of nothing for an advert for the album and the final track is a sort of comedy hip hop choon, which gives the impression that they may like the Bloodhound Gang. This album doesn't take itself too seriously, but there is nowt wrong with a bit of silly-ness is there?

Andy

THE DAMNED - WHO'S PARANOID (The English Channel)

The Damned have such a big history and it is so clear how they have influenced so many bands (AFI immediately spring to mind, horror punk is clearly massively indebted to their sound and dare I say it, My Chemical Romance are clearly fans). They have always challenged genre boundaries with their gothic sounding, dark, twisted and almost theatrical take on punk rock, but the big question for me with this release, as with so many older punk bands, was can this release add to their achievements or are they merely pedalling a sound, which has lost it's relevance.

People hoping for a new stash of 'Smash it Up' type punkness will be disappointed as this is from the off more directed to the gothic pop side of the bands sound and is also pristinely produced. So does it add to the bands legacy? I'm not 100% sure. It's not particularly an album for punk fans, but at times I can appreciate what the band is trying to do. Some of it is too cheesy metal or even a bit cabaret for me personally, but it's definitely got something to offer and is worth a listen. I'll sit on the fence and dig it out of my collection when in the mood for something a bit different.

Andy



THE COMPUTERS - YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM THE COMPUTERS (Fierce Panda)

Many believe these are a band on the verge of big things and I can certainly see them becoming NME darlings in the way Gallows are if luck goes their way. They also have an image which would endear them to an NME audience. I put these guys on last year and really enjoyed them live, where their sound is a mixture of hardcore vocals and rock n' roll almost Bronx like riffs. Recorded they seem much more hardcore sounding than live, which isn't a bad thing, but I wasn't expecting it. If I am cynical, I could say that this is a carefully considered release that is aimed at a more mainstream audience and a band who are aiming high and wanting to appeal to the right people. However, I do like what these guys do and would certainly rather this was on radio than the shite that is. This release for me is at times a little bit samey and the last song 'City Ghosts' is too pedestrian, but overall it's also got some balls, is well executed and the first two tracks and 'Please Drink Responsibly' rock lots. Expect big things to happen to these soon and good luck to them. I think they have potential to do some very good stuff and I'll certainly be checking out future releases. This is definitely worth a listen.

Andy

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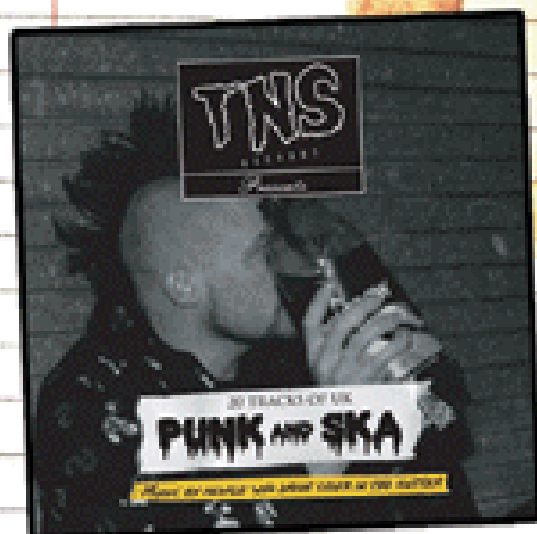
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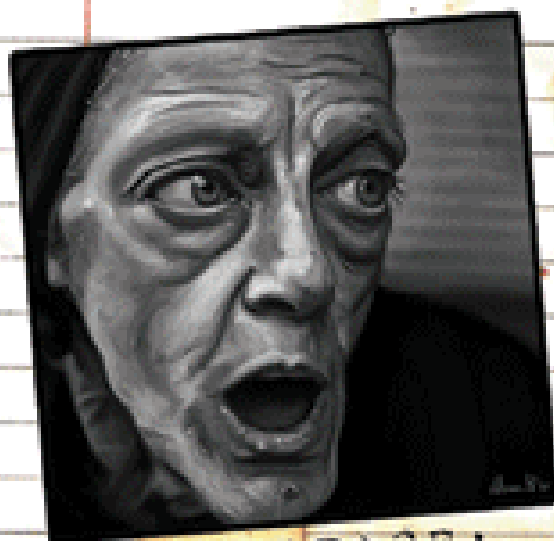
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Sunday 1st Feb

**THE SHADOWCOPS, OFFICER
DOWN, THE EMO'S, D'CORNER
BOIS, SCUMFACE**

Sunday 1st March

**HARIJAN, THE FRACTIONS, JOHN PLAYER
SPECIALS, JUST PANIC, THE STOPOUTS**

6.30PM - 10.30PM £4

TNS
RECORDS